

# Beans, community and Ceproma

– Comparative study of the transformation from self-consumption to market-oriented production in two communities in Costa Rica

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**Supervisor:** Harry Fischer, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences,  
Department of Urban and Rural Development  
**Examiner:** Örjan Bartholdson, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences,  
Department of Urban and Rural Development

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**Keywords:** beans processing, Ceproma, community, rural development, production system



## **Abstract**

During the first decade of the twenty-first century, Costa Rica, like many other countries around the world, suffered from the international prices of basic grains. As a strategy to counteract the negative effects of this problem, the government implemented some projects to boost basic grain production, including the construction of 19 food processing and marketing centers (Ceproma). Its initial function was to serve for the self-consumption of rice, beans and maize but after a few years, their objectives changed to enter the food market. Some of these Cepromas managed to make the change while others still have difficulties to achieve it. This study consists of a comparison between two cases in the southeastern region of the country. With qualitative methods, the livelihoods approach and French sociologist Bourdieu use of theory of practice are used for analysis. The choice in the strategy of livelihoods is related to the interactions, capitals and ways of living of people. Being able to be an entrepreneur, being able to give support to the community and being able to fulfill a role of trust for the settlement has managed to produce positive results in one of the settlements. If a change is to be made, it is not possible to pretend to work in isolation with the technical aspect of production, but an integral work is necessary, taking into account people's livelihoods, the way in which they use the resources they have, the relationship between Ceproma and community, and the impact of these changes on the families related to the settlement and the Ceproma.

*Keywords:* beans processing, Ceproma, community, rural development, production system

## **Abstract**

Durante la primera década del siglo veintiuno, Costa Rica al igual que muchos otros países a nivel mundial, sufría por los precios internacionales de los granos básicos. Como estrategia para contrarrestar los efectos negativos de este problema, el gobierno implementó algunos proyectos de impulso a la producción de granos básicos, incluyendo la construcción de 19 centros de procesamiento y mercadeo de alimentos (Ceproma). Su función inicial era la de servir para el autoconsumo de arroz, frijoles y maíz pero luego de algunos años, sus objetivos cambiaron para ingresar al mercado de alimentos. Algunos de estos Cepromas lograron hacer el cambio mientras otros todavía tienen dificultades para lograrlo. Este estudio consiste en una comparación entre dos casos en la región sureste del país. Con métodos cualitativos se analizan los medios de vida y los la teoría práctica del sociólogo francés Bourdieu. La escogencia en la estrategia de los medios de vida tiene relación con las interacciones, los capitales y las formas de ser de las personas. Lograr ser emprendedor, lograr dar apoyo a la comunidad y poder cumplir un rol de confianza para el asentamiento ha logrado dar frutos positivos en uno de los asentamientos. Si un cambio se quiere realizar, no se puede pretender trabajar aisladamente en la parte técnica de la producción, pero es necesario un trabajo integral que tome en cuenta los medios de vida de las personas, la forma en que utilizan los recursos que poseen, la relación entre el Ceproma y la comunidad y el impacto de estos cambios en las familias relacionadas al asentamiento y al Ceproma.

*Keywords:* procesamiento de frijol, Ceproma, comunidad, desarrollo rural, sistema de producción

# Table of contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Background and research aim</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1	IDA, Inder and Cepromas	4
2.2	Problem	6
2.3	Research questions	7
2.4	Objectives	7
<b>3</b>	<b>Literature review</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1	Self-consumption to market-oriented focus	9
3.2	Livelihoods	10
3.3	Theory of practice	11
	<b>3.3.1</b> Habitus	13
3.4	Livelihoods and the Theory of practice	13
<b>4</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1	Study area	16
4.2	Methodology description	17
4.3	Methods and tools	18
4.4	Data analysis	19
4.5	Scope and limitations of the study	19
<b>5</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>19</b>
5.1	Asentamiento El Progreso	20
5.2	Asentamiento Sansi	29
<b>6</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>35</b>
6.1	The role of an organization as the state	36
6.2	The interconnection between community-Ceproma	37
6.3	The emergence of a leader and entrepreneur	38
<b>7</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>39</b>
	<b>References</b>	<b>41</b>
	<b>Appendix</b>	<b>44</b>
	Appendix 1 – Links for references	44





# Abbreviations

Ceproma	Centro de Procesamiento y Mercadeo de Alimentos
IDA	Instituto de Desarrollo Agrario
Inder	Instituto de Desarrollo Rural
ITCO	Instituto de Tierras y Colonización
PAI	Programa de Abastecimiento Institucional
PRA	Participatory rural appraisal

# 1 Introduction

In the last twenty years Costa Rica has changed the rural development paradigm, as in many countries of Latin America, from a perspective in the fifties of an agricultural sector seen as a backward sector that needed to be modernized. In the sixties the aim was to rationalize and make the small farmers more efficient. The seventies brought programs of integrated rural development, with strong state participation and a slow change of approach from “top-down” to bottom up”; and during the eighties the private sector was granted special recognition in their role to support rural development and a weaker state starting losing its influence in rural areas (Sepúlveda, Rodríguez, Echeverri, & Portilla, 2003). Later on, during the nineties with the international encouragement of theorists such as Scoones, Chambers, Chaney, Bebbington and others, the concept of sustainability was included in the studies of the rural, adding a natural resources management view point in the academic studies and the programs of international organizations and States (Scoones, 2009, 2015). Thus, the way states and international organizations worked on rural development changed its focus initially from the support of people’s subsistence in rural areas, to a perspective aiming a diversified economy involved in the local, national and international markets. The change also obeyed the recent emergence of a new global food regime searching to involve social movements and aiming to achieve food sovereignty (Scoones, 2009). It was between this approach and a new rurality framework that the Food Processing and Marketing Centers (abbreviated to Ceproma in Spanish – Centro de Procesamiento y Mercadeo de Alimentos) were created.

In Costa Rica, a governmental program was established to develop centers in rural areas aimed to improve national grain production and was implemented to facilitate the consumption of beans, maize and rice. After several years, a change in the objective of these centers was made and a market-oriented emphasis was expected for the centers. During these past years, some of the Cepromas were able to change their working systems to engage in regional markets but others are still struggling to achieve the transformation. This brought the question of “why do some Cepromas created in Costa Rica for grain processing are able to achieve the change from a self-consumption to a market-oriented focus, while others do not?” Along with this main question other minor ones were present too. How are people interacting in the communities? How are people perceiving the work of the Ceproma? How does the Ceproma influence the decision in a household’s livelihood? Are there any differences of meaning for the Ceproma within the community, if so, why?

This study analyzes how two different communities in Costa Rica have implemented actions towards the change of the Cepromas aim from supporting self-consumption to industrializing basic grains with market orientation, how the communities where the Cepromas are have influenced the change, and why both of them have achieved different outcomes. This research analyzes how the livelihoods and practices of people affect the interactions within the community and the Ceproma, and how these could facilitate or hinder the change of the Cepromas from a basic grain self-consumption focus to a market-orientation. A comparative study using a qualitative study is implemented to study people's lives, community interactions, the work of the Cepromas and the meaning of these aspects that people create. An ethnography mixed with Participatory Rural Appraisal (abbreviated to PRA) activities, interviews and documentation analysis is used for the investigation. A content analysis of all the data gathered is applied and related to the livelihood framework and with the theory of practice as understood by Pierre Bourdieu. The hypothesis before the study was that, even though the livelihoods in both communities might be similar, some people in one community were able to acquire a more diverse and off-farm livelihood and have different practices that facilitate the transition to a market-oriented work in the Cepromas.

During the study, many people talked about who they were, how it was to live in the settlements, how the state changed their lives when they were chosen to work agriculture in their own land. The time spent on the field watching people living, working and interacting, showed a small part of their lives, how they have some spare time to work in fixing their houses between the two harvests of the year, making them prettier for themselves and for the community. Women work all day long, taking care of the livestock, in house chores, with children, yet they do not take into consideration the effects that a change in the Ceproma might have for their work. The relationship between the community and the Ceproma plays a key role in the decision making of a livelihood strategy in the household. A change in a person's way of thinking from being a farmer to a leader or an entrepreneur affects directly how the Ceproma is administrated and the decisions of how it should work. After twenty years of being supported by the state, the departure of the state has caused many of the settlers feel that they have been abandoned and that the state ought to be responsible for continuing the support they had due to their socioeconomic conditions.

## 2 Background and research aim

The global food systems have had an increasing impact on how food is grown, distributed and utilized, where three different global food regimes, drawing on McMichael's (2013) term, have established the rules. Starting with the British food regime, they used their colonies around the world to produce food and then distribute it for different purposes in another part of the world (McMichael, 2013). The second one, was the regime led by the United States and based on a centered-intensive food regime, which was established in a more globalized world. Lastly, the third and actual food regime is the one based on global corporations. After the third food regime, a countermovement is emerging for some scholars and is based around the concept of food sovereignty and social movements like La Via Campesina. As McMichael sees it, this countermovement is a challenge to the corporate food regime due to the "deepening global agrarian crisis, expressing a fundamental contradiction in the food regime" (2013, p. 57).

A perspective of how global food systems change local policies and practices in local communities are a relevant factor that must be researched in the rural development studies. This is important to understand as it might show why agricultural practices might be changing and where we could have opportunities for improvements of the work in rural areas. We could work together with rural families to change activities and do investments to strengthen the opportunities and the weakness we can find in rural territories. My study examines two rural communities in Costa Rica that aim to change the processing of beans from self-consumption –linked to the food regime led by the United States–, to a strengthening of local collective companies with local and cultural accepted food engaged in local, regional and national market goals– linked to the social movements and food sovereignty challenge to the corporate food regime. For the processing of the beans, the Costa Rican government invested around five million dollars during the period 2008 to 2010 for building and equipping nineteen centers for the processing of mainly basic grains, i.e. maize, rice and beans (Alonso, 2011). The infrastructure and machinery of the centers, called Cepromas, is owned by the Rural Development Institute of Costa Rica (abbreviated to Inder in Spanish – Instituto de Desarrollo Rural), but it is given to be administered to a community organization.

Initially and influenced by the change in the global food regime, the initiative of creating these centers was to generate a better access to resources, to projects, to more diversified assets in the improvement of the livelihoods, and to empower communities to join the markets with traditional food which are an important part of the nation's diet. Another influence of the change to

focus in basic grains processing, was for the different emphasis of rural development brought by the change of law of that changed the Agrarian Development Institution (IDA) to an institution of rural development – a change from small farmers as efficient and rational economic agents to a sustainable livelihoods approach (Sepúlveda et al., 2003). Morgan (1997) as cited by Murdoch, explains that there was shift from “a ‘hard’ infrastructure (i.e. land reclamation, factory provision, and rent subsidy) towards the provision of a ‘soft’ infrastructure (i.e. business service provision, training and knowledge acquisition)” (2000, p. 415). Thus, for the Cepromas the building and equipment was not enough but, strengthening the organizations’ sustainability and agro-industrial business for accessing markets was more important.

## 2.1 IDA, Inder and Cepromas

Costa Rica is a small country with a population of approximately four and a half million people (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos, 2011) and is located in Central America, a bridge of countries connecting the vast lands of North America and South America. With a total area of fifty two thousand square kilometers, it is one of the smallest countries in Latin America but is known to be one of the most economically and socially developed countries in the region and with one of the longest and most stable democracies (HOLA Chamy, 2015).

Even though the country has some strong features of democracy and social development, during the decades of the fifties and sixties, a wave of illegal occupations –by peasants looking for land to work as the agricultural frontier shrank and peasant illegally occupied national forests and private lands, where 8% of the population were illegally occupying 5% of the Costa Rican land. (Picado & Silva, 2002, pp. 37, 38)– was starting to affect the country, mainly the rural areas affecting the tenancy of land by private owners and by the state (Rodríguez Soto & Rodríguez Cruz, 2007). Thus, the legislative branch of the government in cooperation with the executive branch – mainly supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock – worked on a law for the creation of an institution of land and colonization. In 1962 a law was passed to create the Land and Colonization Institute (abbreviated to ITCO in Spanish – Instituto de Tierras y Colonización).

Albeit the ITCO did tackle the immediate problem of illegal possession of land, the law was only able to counteract the superficial issues and not the causes of the conflict. Therefore, a change in the law was needed to try and create a land reform in the country. After twenty years of having the ITCO, a new law was approved and the Agrarian Development Institute (abbreviated to IDA in Spanish – Instituto de Desarrollo Agrario) was created (Rodríguez Soto & Rodríguez Cruz, 2007). The aim of the institute was to improve an agrarian reform, buying idle farm land or land that was

owned by one or a few owners who wanted to sell it, and giving it to landless farmers and peasants for the development of small communities and agricultural projects.

The project of the Cepromas was developed from the years 2005-2006, a few years before the IDA law was changed to create the Inder in 2012. Thus, the centers were established when the aim of the projects depended on the previous law, this means that it answered to a development based on settlements created to achieve agrarian land reform. They were created with the main goal of offering local service of post-harvest where farmers and peasants could take their grains (maize, beans and rice) for processing – cleaning, husking or milling, drying and polishing – facilitating the consumption. The decision of creating these centers for basic grains responded to the context of that moment where the national production was decreasing, the international prices of food were on the rise and because beans, maize and rice were and are the main food in the Costa Rican diet. Overall, the Cepromas are the infrastructure and machinery owned by Inder but given in administration to a local organization for their use. For the case of this thesis, the term Ceproma will be used for both the infrastructure and machinery, and for the organization who manage it.

Noteworthy, the IDA had a main objective of buying land, dividing it, and lastly, giving it to landless farmers for them to work. The new settlements were by law, supported almost completely by this institution, meaning that any improvement or support was given primarily by IDA. Electricity, water, roads, farming inputs, among others, was planned, bought and distributed by the institution, sometimes taking into account what the settlers wanted and needed, sometimes as a decision directly from someone in an office. This is important to understand because with the change to Inder, people who had several years living in the settlement were used to this type of assistance from the government and it was part of how they lived.

In Costa Rica the production of the three main basic grains – maize, beans and rice – has constantly decreased since the decades of the seventies and eighties and has not increased since (González Gamboa, 2017), this means that for 2014, 61% of the basic grains was imported to Costa Rica (Chacón Araya, 2014), hence, the proposal of several public institutions to create the centers and boost the production of beans, maize and rice. After the initial plan of creating these centers for self-consumption, and with the change of law to create the Inder –which responded to IDA's inability to adapt to the new rurality of the country, and to achieve a sustainable improvement of people's lives without a constant support of the state in the settlements, and outside them where IDA was prohibited by law to work–, some of the organizations administrating the centers together with Inder decided that a change was needed for these centers to have a market-oriented focus (primarily on a regional and national level). Some of these new ideas for the centers are covered in

the new Strategic plan for food security, nutrition and hunger eradication, where the government established several objectives and actions in which the production of food is encouraged to help achieving food security, improve employment and decrease malnutrition (Secretaría Ejecutiva de Planificación Sectorial Agropecuaria, 2017).

For the specific case of this study, the money invested in El Progreso and Sansi was similar for both, taking into account that the latter was created in 1998 and in 1992 the former. For this research I take into account the investment in three programs that Inder has: a) food security, b) infrastructure, and c) rural credit. Food security is in charge of investing non-refundable resources for different assets linked with food security such as seeds, cattle, greenhouses, fertilizers and herbicides, among others. Infrastructure on the other hand, is invests in roads, electrification, water supply, schools and others. Lastly, the rural credit office implements a program of loans with low interest for activities related to agrobusiness but also to other activities that could improve the lives of rural families and the development of rural areas.

## 2.2 Problem

The organizations in charge of the administration of the Cepromas in joint decision with Inder, decided several years ago to change the goal of the centers from a self-consumption system to a market-oriented one. Some continue to process basic grains, others are changing to other products such as guava, pepper, plantains and cacao. The nineteen centers around the country have had diverse outcomes achieving this change and several factors might be the causes of why the different results.

The Ceproma El Progreso is one of the centers that is achieving the planned tasks and that needs less support from public institutions. On the other hand, the center in Sansi has been trying to change the self-consumption work in recent years without achieving the expected results. Several studies of the Cepromas were made and are in progress, but most of them focus on agricultural matters, the machinery, the process in itself and the organizational structure. There is a lack of a social study about the communities where the Cepromas are located and about the relationship between the communities and the centers. This study fills a gap in the issue of social sciences on the importance of understanding how communities and people also have an impact on the work of an agribusiness.

## 2.3 Research questions

The study aims to analyze how the livelihoods and practices of people affect the interactions within the community and the Ceproma, and how these could facilitate or hinder the change of the Cepromas from a basic grain self-consumption focus to a market-orientation. Therefore, I want to understand the everyday life in the communities, how people live, how they see themselves, how they see the others, and how they interact and relate among them. I want to learn how everyday factors like these have affected the transition from self-consumption to the access into the regional market. The key goal of this study is to analyze different livelihoods strategies and the factors involved in community interactions, individuals' lives (who they are and what they have), and how these factors might affect the change of the Cepromas from a self-consumption processing of beans to a market-oriented work. Thus, it is important to try and answer how people “act” in the community, and the Ceproma; act using the different capitals they have in their livelihoods and the relations of the different actors. Therefore, my main research question would be:

- Why do some Cepromas created in Costa Rica for grain processing are able to achieve the change from a self-consumption to a market-oriented focus, while others do not?

In order to explore this question, the inquiry will be guided by questions such as: How do people live? Why do they live as they do? How community interactions take place? Why do people give a certain meaning to the work of the Cepromas? How does the practices and habitus affect the livelihood in the two communities and thus, these affect the work of Cepromas? For now, the preliminary hypothesis I have, is that the difference of outcome is because the community where the Ceproma that successfully changed from a self-consumption to a market oriented bean processing, has a livelihood strategy which includes people with more capital related to a strong social network where the union of the community is broader, in addition to a habitus related to an entrepreneurial attitude; on the other hand, the other community has a lower social capital and the most common habitus in the community is that of a farmer with difficulties becoming an entrepreneur.

## 2.4 Objectives

The objectives of this study are linked and dependent of the problem of study and the research questions. The objectives are to:

- Understand the process of change in bean processing and how the social arena in which the Ceproma El Progreso and Ceproma Sansi are placed has affected this change.



- Analyze and compare the livelihoods and practices different people have and how they use it in order to interact in the community and the Ceproma in El Progreso and Sansi.

### 3 Literature review

The theoretical background for my study is based on two main approaches, livelihoods and theory of practice. The combination of both approaches will complement each other strengthening each other's weaknesses. Livelihoods is defined by Chambers and Conwell as "the capabilities, assets (...) and activities required for a means of living" (1992, p. 6) and it is sustainable when it can be constant and improved through time for other generations. Following this definition, the way people earn their living is important to understand how they convert some capital into other, how they cope with changes, and how they choose a living strategy. The analysis for my master thesis agrees and follows the understanding of Fischer and Chhatre when they state in their paper that livelihoods and assets "provide a tangible basis to explore the constraints and opportunities that differently placed households face in their actual material conditions of living" (2016, p. 5).

On the other hand, the theory of practice helps me analyze the practices of people, or as Oerther and Oerther explain it, this theory "emphasizes that individual's everyday practices are not always explicit and mediated by language, but instead individual's everyday practices are often tacit and embodied" (2018, p. 820). The concept of practice is explained by Bourdieu as "a cognitive operation, a practical operation of construction which sets to work, by reference to practical functions, systems of classifications (taxonomies) which organize perception and structure of practice" (1972/2017, p. 97). The way I will use theory of practice is based on the explanation of it given by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, together with his concept of habitus. This analysis includes how people's habitus affect the way they act and how people interact and give meaning to the bean processing in their lives. I study the different assets that compose the capitals they use in their livelihoods, how people earn their living, how they use these capitals for their livelihoods and how these are reflected in the interactions within the communities and with other neighboring communities.

These two perspectives allow us to analyze people's ways of living, what they do to live, and how do they choose the strategy for their future and for their families. Combining the livelihoods approach and theory of practice, we might reach an understanding of how and why people choose a specific livelihood and how this decision is bound to structural norms which

restrict the action frame of people. If a household chooses to have few chickens, grow some crops for family consumption and have a surplus of one crop to sell in the market, why do they do it? Why do they limit themselves to those options? However, if a household chooses to change their entire production to a cash crop, why do they prefer to sell all the production in the market and buy most food in town? The combination of both approaches is useful to try and answer some of these questions.

### 3.1 Self-consumption to market-oriented focus

Several studies have been carried out about the change from a self-consumption system to a market-oriented approach. The change is part of policies around the world in the search of agricultural improvement and poverty reduction (Ton & Proctor, 2013). According to Segundo Conterato et al (2001), as cited by Rodríguez González & Coelho-de-Souza, 2014, p. 105, some academics study the modernization of agriculture and how this was the cause of a higher insertion of smallholders in the market. Some of the authors believe that “policies that support smallholders’ livelihoods, particularly through market access, can play a vital role in reducing poverty and enhancing food security” (Chmielewska & Souza, 2010, p. 2). Nevertheless, these policies cannot be only oriented to the production, but must take into account the whole chain from production to retail (Cavatassi et al., 2009, p. 3). Cavatassi et al, also explain some disadvantages of this approach, “the agricultural intensification that often accompanies market-oriented agriculture may lead to a focus on a few commercially-oriented varieties, to increased chemical use and to intensified land use, and thus to potentially negative environmental and health consequences” (2009, p. 3).

In the report for the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) about smallholders’ integration to markets, Arias, Hallam, Krivonos, and Morrison make a detailed study of the participation that small farmers have in the decision-making process and engaging in food markets. For example, they explain that unless small farmers have “appropriate incentives, they have access to, and the ability to use assets productively, and efficient infrastructure allows them to transport their product to market at reasonable cost” (2013, p. 13), they would not participate on the same extent on the markets. Therefore, for these cases the authors claim that policies should avoid creating external costs that would damage investments in agriculture as it “plays a primary role in food security, the provision of social safety nets, and social cohesion (Arias et al., 2013, p. 14). In the study of Wichern et al. (2017) in Uganda, the authors investigate the reasons and the characteristics of different households and how they make decisions about their livelihoods, how

these decisions could be different depending on differences of food availability, and they have as one of the options the change or increase of market-oriented production.

On this basis, it is important to recall that the change from self-consumption to market-orientation responds to a change of livelihood depending on structural norms and the own situation of families. When the state and market give incentives for households to change their production to engage in local markets, the family carries out a comparison between the benefits and the disadvantages of selling one part or all of the production, they think about what they are going to earn, what they are going to lose and in which situation they are currently.

### 3.2 Livelihoods

According to the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, the “livelihoods approach is concerned first and foremost with people. It seeks to gain an accurate and realistic understanding of people’s strengths (assets or capital endowments) and how they endeavor to convert these into positive livelihood outcomes” (1999, p. 5). The livelihood framework, as studied by Ellis, consists on “the assets (natural, physical, human, financial, and social capital), the activities, and the access to these (mediated by institutions and social relations) that together determine the living gained by the individual or household” (2000, p. 10). Similar to Ellis, Carney explains that the sustainable livelihood framework

centers on the objectives, scope, and priorities for development from the perspective of poor people. This ‘way of thinking’ requires a commitment to probe beyond technical issues, beyond the superficial political and institutional issues, to develop a realistic understanding of the livelihoods of poor people and how these can be improved (2003, p. 13).

On the other hand, van Dijk includes a more structural research of livelihoods and argues that the framework studies the “arrangements (which are fragile but path-dependent emergent properties of the web of structures households operate in) within the realms of community, state, family and private sector” (2011, p. 102). For my investigation, this framework is the basis for the analysis of both communities as my concern is about people and how they use their assets and capitals.

The livelihood framework was used and is still used by many of the main international development donors, International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom. It was during the 1990’s decade that the livelihood framework had its high point. The University of Essex, primarily the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), was one of the leaders in

the academic field researching about the topic (Scoones, 2009). Initiating with the paper of Chambers and Conway (1992), which was the culmination of a first stage of the development of the concepts, and later on continued by scholars such as Bebbington (1999), Ellis (2000), Carney (2003), among others. In their paper, Chambers and Conway start by relating livelihoods with three concepts: capabilities, equity and sustainability (1992, p. 5). After giving a definition of a livelihood –cited at the beginning of this chapter–, they explain that a livelihood has four categories, people (their livelihood capabilities), activities (what they do), assets (could be tangible or intangible) and gains or outputs (a living, what they gain) (1992, p. 7; Fischer & Chhatre, 2016, p. 4). Regarding the assets or capitals used in the livelihood framework, these are

often categorised between five or more distinct asset types owned or accessed by family members: human capital (skills, education, health), physical capital (produced investment goods), financial capital (money, savings, loan access), natural capital (land, water, trees, grazing etc.) and social capital (networks and associations). (Ellis & Freeman, 2005, p. 3)

The livelihood approach uses mixed methods to gather information that will later be analyzed in order to understand the realities of people in issues such “as access, change, and trends, how assets and activities of the poor differ from those of the better off” (Ellis, 2000, p. 227). Furthermore, this approach helps us understand the different decisions people make to earn a living, if they diversify their activities, their vulnerabilities, the decisions of income distribution, agriculture and farm productivity, how it differs for men and women, and the effect of macro policies. The mixed methods used in the livelihoods approach, play “different roles in achieving a clear picture for policy purposes of the livelihoods situation of the rural poor” (Ellis, 2000, p. 227).

### 3.3 Theory of practice

One of the main proponents of the theory of practice is Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist who is well known in the academic field for his theoretical approach. He is one of the most important scholars that have attempted to reconcile the agency and structure dichotomy. Bourdieu tries to mediate between subjectivism and objectivism through the concept of habitus which is influenced by the social and cultural positions to which a specific person belongs , but also by the social structures in which the person acts using different capitals (Inglis, 2012). Using this a context, Orter explains that the theory of practice explains “is the genesis, reproduction, and change of form and meaning of a given social/cultural whole”, therefore, the study of practice is the study of human action (1984, p. 149). The theory of practice seeks to explain the relationship between human action

and a global entity (system) because “action itself has (developmental) structure, as well as operating *in*, and in relation *to*, structure”(Ortner, 1984, p. 150). Or as Bourdieu’s explains it, the theory of practice establishes that the objects of knowledge are constructed, not passively recorded, and, opposing to intellectualist idealism, that the principle of this construction is the system of structured and structuring dispositions which is constituted in practice and is always oriented towards practical functions (1980/2007a, p. 85). Hence, for understanding the phenomenon researched in my master thesis, understanding the practices or actions of people in both communities would help me also understand the action itself and the structures in which they are working in.

Bourdieu’s concepts of capitals and habitus are essential to understand the theory of practice that he develops mainly in his books “Outline of a theory of Practice” (1972/2017) and “The logic of practice” (Bourdieu, 1980/2007b). Bourdieu explains capital as “accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its ‘incorporated’, embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor” (1986, p. 15) and it is effective in a certain field allowing the owner to have a power, an influence, therefore to exist in the this field, instead of being considered a “negligible quantity” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992/2014, p. 136). Another definition of capital, is given by Wacquant where he explains it as “any resource effective in a structured arena of social action (or field) that allows one to obtain the specific profits that arise out of activity and contest within that arena” (1998, p. 26). Wacquant defines the capitals as: “economic capital, consisting of financial and material assets and flows; cultural (or informational) capital, that is, instruments of appropriation of valued cultural products, which exist in the embodied, objectified, and institutionalized form; and social capital” (1998, p. 26). There can be different forms of capitals but, as Bourdieu explains the three main capitals:

capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as cultural capital, which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as social capital, made up of social obligations (“connections”), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility (1986, p. 16)

As one can see, the definitions of capitals for the livelihood approach and for Bourdieu are different. For this reason, the definition of capital that would be used in this master thesis is that capital is a stock of different resources (material or embedded) which can be used directly or indirectly to facilitate a living strategy, including the interaction with other people.

### 3.3.1 Habitus

The theory of practice uses different concepts to develop the analysis, but for my master thesis, the main concept that I will use is Bourdieu's habitus. The habitus is explained by the French sociologist as "the universalizing mediation which causes an individual agent's practices, without either reason or signifying intent, to be none less 'sensible' and 'reasonable' " (1972/2017, p. 82). A habitus is the set of dispositions that a person possesses, consists of past experiences and it functions as

(...) a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks, thanks to analogical transfers of schemes permitting the solution of similarly shaped problems, and thanks to the unceasing corrections of the results obtained, dialectically produced by those results (Bourdieu, 1972/2017, p. 83).

## 3.4 Livelihoods and the Theory of practice

This research main approach is the livelihood framework, however I believe that it is not enough to use livelihoods to understand the complete phenomenon. Therefore, to complement the framework with the theory of practice might result in a better understanding of why some Cepromas in Costa Rica failed to change from self-consumption to market-oriented focus. One of the purposes with the theoretical focus I chose, is to link both approaches, taking the livelihood framework and relating it with a broader understand of the social structure that shapes people's actions, which is given by the theory of practice. For this study, relating agency (livelihoods) and structure (key part of theory of practice) is important, and as according to Leach, Mearns, and Scoones in their paper about environmental entitlements, the agency of people is always embedded within structures of society. The authors explain how linking both

"emphasises how structures, rules and norms emerge as products of people's practices and actions, both intended and unintended. These structural forms subsequently shape people's action; not by strict determination but by providing flexible orientation points which may either constrain or enable what is possible" (1999, p. 230)

In the livelihood approach, there is a link between “inputs (capitals, assets, resources) and outputs (livelihoods strategies), connected in turn to outcomes, which combined familiar territory (of poverty lines and employment levels) with framing (of wellbeing and sustainability)” (Scoones, 2015, pp. 8, 9). This means that there is agency in how people decide to use their inputs and outputs, but the familiar territory and framing has much to do with the social structure, this is, the formal and informal institutions that comprise the relationship between people. Complementing the livelihood approach with the theory of practice will facilitate the analysis of people’s lives, this is, how people act, and how their actions or practices shape and are shaped by social norms. Both together will shape an understanding of the agency of people, the decisions they make and the social norms that frame these decisions.

The livelihoods approach and the theory of practice would help me in to understand which is the social organization of the smallholders of the communities, showing how the division of labor is established in different strata, gender, or kinship, and through this division, which networks are created in the communities and outside of them. The theory of practice and livelihoods approach would facilitate the study of the social institutions created and recreated within these networks and practices, the various forms of capitals that actors draw on in their economic and social practices and interactions. Scoones argues that the scholars that study and use the livelihoods approach have a dominant concern in their work about poverty reduction and the economic aspects of people’s lives. Hence, the policies and politics dimensions are not full analyzed regarding how these two dimensions affect and shape the livelihoods strategies of people (2009, p. 180). The author explains how the livelihoods approach has failed to incorporate the analysis of “big shifts in the state of global markets and politics” (2009, p. 181), “power and politics and the failure to link livelihoods and governance” (2009, p. 182).

Even though the livelihood approach provides a stable basis for the understanding of the phenomenon of how people in a community live, how they earn a living, and how they choose to cope and change their ways of living, the more structural factors that frame those changes are not well explored by this framework. Hence, using the theory of practice and Bourdieu’s concept of habitus supports an analysis how people live, how they understand their lives and relationships with other members of the community and their own role in society.

A critique of the livelihood framework as a main approach, was given by Sakdapolrak (2014). His paper was a strategic study with which I took the decision of focusing on the theory of practice as a complementary approach to the livelihoods framework. He argues that livelihoods are embedded within social relations which facilitate or constrain the decision of choosing an specific

livelihood strategy, but livelihoods are also “rooted and shaped” by a person’s habitus excluding certain choices of livelihoods from a person’s strategy options (2014, p. 22). Sakdapolrak argues that

a Bourdieusian approach emphasises the inherent rationalities of human action and draws attention to its social embeddedness and path-dependent character. In employing such a perspective, the analysis of livelihoods is able to capture in a more realistic way the dynamic and multi-dimensional nature of the way in which people make their living (2014, p. 23).

The combination of the livelihoods and theory of practice allows us to analyze the researched problem of this master thesis, combining the way people live, knowing that most of the settlers live from farm production mixing different proportions of staple food, cash crops and livestock. Taking this as a starting point, we can relate the assets and capitals people have and analyze it with broader structures. An asset of human capital such as education, as explained by Ellis (2000) is important for choosing a livelihood strategy, but Bourdieu’s approach can tell us why are people from the settlements only reaching a level of primary school, how does the practices and habitus make it harder for these people to break this cycle and continue with higher education.

## 4 Methodology

The investigation consists of a comparative study between two different communities in the south-eastern region of the Región Brunca in Costa Rica, where two different villages have a Ceproma. The first village is Pejibaye, located in the San Isidro del General canton, and the second is Pittier in the Coto Brus canton. Both centers work mainly with the processing of beans, where the former is known for doing an effective and efficient commercialization of beans in different locations, while the latter works mainly with beans for self-consumption and depends on the former to commercialize their product outside the community. Therefore, I have chosen to use the comparative design because the purpose of my thesis will be to “study two contrasting cases using more or less identical methods” (Bryman, 2012, p. 72). Thus, one must also understand that a comparative study has weaknesses, for example that I would be driven to look for variables that might be comparable instead of going in depth to specific variables of each case (Bryman, 2012). Other alternatives could have been to choose an in-depth study with the information of only one case, but that will take away the opportunity to compare two cases and analyze how things differ and if one case could improve using the other as an example. Similarly, an experimental design



could have helped in the understanding difference of one case or both, but this design takes a longer time and budget that are not at my disposal.

My research will try to accomplish an understanding of how people construct their lives in relation to their interaction with the community and therefore, with the bean processing occurring in each community. The research intends to understand how people live, which are the practices they have and why do they do them, what is the meaning of these practices, how they use their capitals, and which is the meaning that people give to their lives and to the Cepromas. Therefore, phenomenology is also important for this research. As the purpose of this thesis is to analyze the way people act, the way people live, the way people relate with other people, phenomenology would help in the concern of “everyday life – the ordinary, mundane contexts in which people operate. How these are created through actions and interactions, and how in turn contexts of everyday life make possible actions and interactions” (Inglis, 2012, p. 86). The action theory used in this thesis would better fit to understand my data using a phenomenological method to record and define the type of data needed from the phenomenon in the two communities of Costa Rica. In this thesis, I share the stand point of existential phenomenologists who, according to Inglis, “the perception and consciousness of individuals are seen as being ‘located’ – in particular times, places and lifeworlds (2012, p. 101). One must understand that the meaning people give to their realities is always framed in a time and place and always with a specific background.

#### 4.1 Study area

The two Cepromas that I chose for my master thesis are in the region with the second largest amount of bean production in the country, around 34% of the total production of the country (Elizondo Mora, 2017a, 2017b) and therefore, the processing they have in the plant is mainly for beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris* in the red and black variety) and one day a week they also process rice (*Oryza sativa*). One of the Cepromas is located in the district of Pejibaye, Pérez Zeledón canton and province of San José (the larger political-administrative division of Costa Rica are called provinces, followed by cantons and the smallest ones are districts). The other one is located in the district of Pittier, Coto Brus canton and province of Puntarenas. Both Cepromas are located in the same region and only around one hundred kilometers from each other. The social indicators of the districts where they are located are similar to each other, placing them below the national average of the Social Development Indicator, the district of Pejibaye scores 45,2 with around eight thousand people living in 206 square kilometers. On the other hand, Pittier scores 36,9 on that same indicator

but with only around three thousand people living in 255 square kilometers (Ministerio de Planificación Nacional y Política Económica, 2013).

## 4.2 Methodology description

For the gathering and use of data in the comparative study, an approach of research was chosen from one of three different methods after analyzing the explanation of Creswell about the quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods approach (2014, p. 12). For my master thesis, the research uses mainly the qualitative approach as I want to study and try to understand the lives, interactions and meanings of people in two communities, I want to comprehend why and how people live, how they interact, how they use their habitus and capitals in the community interactions and bean processing. My emphasis is on data about people's behavior, actions and beliefs.

The comparative study I chose for this investigation, uses a qualitative gathering and use of data to obtain information about the meaning people give to the bean processing in the two communities, their livelihoods and their community interaction. In order to be compared, analyzed and understand the differences, similarities and reach conclusions about the phenomenon, the qualitative approach provides the means necessary to apply different methods to gather data and its analysis. For the data collecting I used several methods of the qualitative approach explained by Creswell (2014), including observation, interviews, and document review. In addition to these methods, I applied PRA tools such as timeline, Venn diagram and direct observation (Cavestro, 2003; HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, 2015).

The plan was to have a fieldwork where I could stay between one and two weeks in each community and several days in the headquarters in San José, Costa Rica. The fieldwork in the community was done with individual interviews, around fifteen people on each community were interviewed, that could help understand a person's view and opinion. The interviews were done with community members in both locations, as well as with members of the Ceproma administrations, six government officials of the institution who owns the centers (two in each community and two in the headquarters). As I am Costa Rican, all the interviews and document reviews were done in Spanish. This helped me understand more the cultural background and avoiding most of the language barriers with the people I talked with. This resulted in data about what people think is the reason for how the two Cepromas have developed the grain processing and about the different kinds of interactions within the community that support the process.

During the PRA activities in each community, pictures were taken to record the information gathered. In one community around fifteen people were present, while in the other

community had an attendance of five people. The timeline and the Venn diagram were done in the same day, one afternoon after the work in the field was over and the farmers could attend. The location, date and time was chosen by the organization that administers the Ceproma. The participatory observation was done in both centers for the rice processing as both do it every Saturday, and in one Ceproma it was also done for the bean processing; the other Ceproma was not processing beans during my fieldwork.

### 4.3 Methods and tools

The methods were semi-structured interviews, document analysis, Venn diagram, timeline and participatory observation. The semi-structured interviews are “guided conversations where broad questions are asked, which do not constrain the conversation, and new questions are allowed to arise as a result of the discussion” (Cavestro, 2003, p. 16) and help to capture, among other things, people’s lives, community interactions, the community views of change over time in the processing goals, how they see the support of other institutions, how community members see the community relations. On the other hand, the PRA facilitates to study the phenomenon from the point of view of experiences in the communities, hence, increasing the mutual learning about the topic (Cargo & Mercer, 2008). The PRA (including timeline, direct observation and Venn diagram) methods are useful in my master thesis in order to understand the lives of the community members; how they earn their living, how they interact and with whom, what is important for them in their everyday life, in their community lives, and their relations with the Ceproma. The timeline is created with community members and recount “the most important events in the community’s past and prepare with the information a historical timeline” (Cavestro, 2003, p. 19). The timeline activity helps to analyze the change in the communities since some years before the opening of the centers, to nowadays and which has been the impact of the Ceproma living in the surroundings. The Venn diagram tool “shows institutions, organisations, groups and important individuals found in the village, as well as the villagers view of their importance in the community (...) also indicates how close the contact and cooperation between those organisations and groups is” (Cavestro, 2003, p. 22). The Venn Diagram could clarify the relation between the most important institutions and how close these institutions are to the community. Finally, direct observation of the community and of the processing of beans could show a different frame of the everyday life experiences of people and the meaning they give to it (Cavestro, 2003; HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, 2015).

## 4.4 Data analysis

For the analysis of the data I used in a mixture of content analysis and ethnography of the information gathered with the interviews and the PRA tools. For the content analysis I use Hsieh's and Shannon's definition where the authors argue that qualitative content analysis is "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (2005, p. 1278), while ethnography helps to complement the identification of themes and patterns by describing the lifeworld of the people in the communities. Ethnography is helpful for my master thesis as it helps me understand "people's actual experience" (Rankin, 2017, p. 2).

## 4.5 Scope and limitations of the study

The study covered issues of community interactions, bean processing, people's lives, and livelihoods only taking into account the two communities where the chosen Cepromas are located, hence, the results cannot be generalized for all nineteen centers of the country. The study was conducted only with a few of the members of each community, as the time and economic resources were limited which also meant that there were limits to corroborate the veracity of the information obtained from the interviews. A triangulation was not possible to do with data from other sources to validate the information.

# 5 Results

For this chapter, I divided the results by community and in each, a subsection about Bourdieu's concept of habitus. In the next chapter, I use the empirical findings to contextualize the research problem and questions. Starting with a review of documentation, it was difficult to find social sciences studies regarding bean processing or a social research about the Cepromas or settlements created by IDA. Most of the information I could find was quantitative data about how much beans were produced, how much land was farmed, how much money was invested, and other information about the Cepromas and the production they work with, but most often related to quantities of production. Therefore, the results are based almost completely in interviews and observations during my fieldwork.

Entering both settlements was no problem. I had some contacts with public servants working with Inder, and they helped me get in touch with the persons in charge of the organizations

administrating the Cepromas. A first assessment about the dates and places to stay was therefore, simple. The transportation to the places is not difficult, yet it differed for both settlements. For the two journeys a division can be made in two parts. The first from the nearest large town to the nearest bus stop. The second part, the journey between the bus stop to the settlement. El Progreso settlement has a greater facility for access to the last bus stop with a higher frequency of trips per day. On the contrary, the trip from the last bus stop to the settlement is closer for Sansi although this road can be interrupted in the rainy season due to the rise of a stream. The contact person in each community was helpful for transportation within the community and helped me get in and out of the settlement. For the interviews, I had the same problem of not having transportation inside the settlement and I depended on the goodwill of someone to take me with his motorcycle, or I had to walk. The data collected showed the following results.

## 5.1 Asentamiento El Progreso

The settlement (asentamiento) El Progreso was created in 1992 in the district of Pejibaye, Pérez Zeledón canton. Most of the plots (parcelas) in the settlement, (forty-eight of a total of fifty) are already without legal limitations; this means that the owners can sell, rent or do what they want with the land. All of the plots are around six hectares each. In the so called *centro de población* (population center), the people living there are the same people who own a plot for agricultural production. In order to arrive to this town from the closest big city, one must take a bus from San Isidro to Pejibaye downtown. This bus takes around one hour or one hour and a half. The bus costs 1350 colones (for the time of the fieldwork the exchange rate was around 560 colones per one American dollar) and it runs ten times a day. After the bus one must walk to El Progreso or take a taxi – legal or illegal with a cost of 3000 colones and a duration of 20 additional minutes. Most settlers own at least a motorcycle, so someone can come to pick them, or they have it parked in town to later get to the settlement.

As main livelihoods in the settlement, I found out that people grow crops in their own plots for household consumption such as rice, maize, beans and cassava, complementing it with some chickens. The main source of income most of them have is by selling beans to the cooperative, while a few people complement it with on-farm wage work. There are several households who have diversified their agricultural production with coffee, ginger or tiquizque (*xanthosoma saggitifolium*). Regarding natural capital, all of the settlers of El Progreso own their own plot for farming, and some of them have also land for their house which is close to the town center with drinking water distributed by the state; almost every household owns their land, and even if all of

them have access to electricity to cook, some families prefer to keep using timber –accessible in their own plots or in near natural reserves. The settlers who sell beans to the Ceproma also get seeds for planting from the state or on a discount in the closest agricultural store. For physical capital the settlement has no irrigation system, it has gravel roads, in the middle of the asentamiento there is a bridge which some days every year is covered by water closing the access of most plots to the Ceproma.

In the case of human capital, all settlers are experienced farmers in crops used for self-consumption. Regarding the health for the settlers, most of them are in good shape, but some are having problems that come with age such as Alzheimer and Parkinson. Most people finished their education with primary school and the few of them who have higher education are children of the settlers who live in other cities. The average age of the settlers based on my observations is around 55 years old. The financial capital is based on the income of selling the produce, together with loans they obtain from the Ceproma or other local credits organizations. Lastly, social capital, which is perhaps the most important asset that the people in El Progreso possess, is characterized by a growing social network that the cooperative has developed through the years. A social network that starts with the own cooperative members and extends to national federations of cooperatives that share experiences and train each other in different topics. Through this social network, the characteristic of leadership is encouraged, they look for a person in which they can trust, a person that could represent their needs and their goals as a community when negotiation with public institutions and other bean industries in the region. But if a person achieves this leadership will be object of communal scrutiny where some people agree on having a peer as a leader, or some who refuse to accept a farmer like them as a leader. Therefore, if any person attains this status, he or she will also obtain political power and symbolic capital in town. In the case of the settlement El Progreso, social networks together with health and skills are the main assets one must own to carry out agricultural labor. Because IDA ran the support of the settlements, this institution gave land, farming inputs, organizational workshops and public services, many of the settlers had to put only their own physical effort and knowledge in the working of the plot. This together with social network of kinship between family members living in the same settlement or between neighbors, they could work the land and give an initial processing of the harvest.

The farm labor is mainly done by men, although many women do work in some stages of the process, for example house chores, taking care of children or elderly people; therefore, men are the ones that primarily do most of the agricultural duties. In rural Costa Rica, where most of the settlements were created by IDA and now are created with Inder, men are the ones who call

themselves farmers and in the life stories they told me about themselves, the ones that go out and work. *“(Woman talking) Well, I do something, a little bit of everything. (Man talking) This, we work all together, the whole family.”* To facilitate this farm labor and the commercialization of products, people must be able to negotiate with other farmers and with public and private organizations. They use their social networks to access credits, farming tools, and work force, making a promise to pay it back in the same way, with part of the harvest or with money after the Ceproma buys the production. The Ceproma is also, one of the key actors in the social network of the settlers, as if they are members of the cooperative that runs it, they have better access to inputs, credits and tool that the Ceproma facilitates and gives a better treatment to its members.

One perfect example of how physical asset can help increasing symbolic capital and social capital are –this also applies for Sansi– motorcycles and cars. Talking with young men, the ones that should follow their fathers’ path in agriculture, they say that they wish to have a better bike, or a car that will let them move at free will. But also, when talking to each other, they start comparing who has a better motorcycle and how some of them have worked hard to be able to buy a special brand. Here an asset such as a car or a motorcycle gives a higher symbolic capital, representing who has the money and who works hard. Having a motorcycle or a car already increases the social status of a family and helps them access a larger social network and economic means by having their own transportation mean, but the symbolic capital is increased (mainly in men and young people) depending on the brand and year of the vehicle.

Regarding the difference of livelihood strategies among rich and poor households, it is important to take into consideration that most people began from scratch together with the creation of the Ceproma. They started working the land, with a similar context, this means that they started working the same amount of land in approximately the same year, with soils that have similar quality, and with the same inputs. The only difference could be the skills and knowledge in working the land that they brought from their own experience but all of them say to be farmers since they were born. Hence, there are not that many households that were able to stand out from the average household in the settlement. The few that were able to achieve a positive recognition from their neighbors as being better off in their socioeconomical condition, have livelihoods depending less on one crop (beans in this case) and have diversified to incomes from off-farm activities such as owning a grocery store or product transport services, yet the human and natural capitals are similar to the others. Knowing the assets, it is important to recognize what people are investing in. For the case of El Progreso, people invest in transportation means, in diversifying production, improving their houses and in their children’s education (at least until they finish high school). The options

they have for a livelihood are limited to the education they have, while other resources such as land, inputs, and knowledge might be similar among the settlers. As they are farmers owning their land, with a social network based on the community and the Ceproma, most of the settlers choose to grow beans (one of the crops they know better) and sell it to the cooperative. To choose a different livelihood would mean they had to begin with something that might be unknown for them and where they do not have a sure market for the new product.

We can find stories of successful businessman, people who have diversified their production to improve their lives. Two are the households in the settlement that are seen by those as successful business families. One who diversified with a grocery store and another who diversified the agricultural production and are better off than the average family. Nevertheless, even if other settlers see the owner of the grocery store as better off, he and his wife do not say they are better-off than most settlers. They even say that they must work hard, that they need the support of the public institutions to improve their lives and not have a rough time as they currently have. *“I can hardly work in agriculture anymore, and agriculture is worthless (...) and the business we own can be said to be nothing more than for what we eat.”* Another way to climb in the socioeconomical status within the settlement is to be employed, mainly for the youth. The young people and their parents are proud to say that they have jobs, and do not need to depend on agriculture to earn a living. For example, the Ceproma brought jobs for women, which used to go out of town to find a job, mainly in domestic chores in houses of other people. The creation of this jobs brought a more positive status of women as a contributor of income for the household, and for the Ceproma as a key actor in the job creation in the community. Nonetheless, this also brought some conflict because right now, just two of the women working are from El Progreso, the others come from Pejibaye.

The few people who have differentiated themselves from the rest of the community, changed their livelihoods, diversifying their income to grocery stores or agricultural products other than beans. *“When I started I also had wage-labor, but also I worked my land, but I had wage labor too”*. Members of the community which have similar economic capital talk about the importance of working towards diversification –in other agricultural products, but also in non-farming activities– to stand out of the average, but also acknowledging that this change needs different agricultural inputs, skills and knowledge together with a different social network that could help them commercializing the new products. They know that achieving these new factors are hard but is a risky investment they must make to achieve diversification. Others, instead of diversifying wage labor with farm production, diversify in the production they have, mixing beans with tiquizque and ginger (mainly), which they can sell in the closest town. For El Progreso, it is harder to diversify the



farm production as it needs a stronger and broader social network for the commercialization, but also money to buy the seeds and the inputs that Inder do not give every year.

The livelihoods approach is an important base for the analysis of the phenomena in the settlements, but it is equally important to apply Bourdieu's theoretical framework. In the case of El Progreso, the economic capital is important for the Ceproma, but the crucial capital is social capital. As a cooperative, the organization that administers the center knows it and the manager explains how they aim for a balance within profits as a company and social investment for the members and for the community. *"We want the company to move forward but without leaving members abandoned, we want that they feel supported by the Ceproma that they feel that the benefit of the payment also benefits them."* Some of the cooperative members are well aware of the importance that social networks have for them and for the cooperative. Most of the community members and cooperative members, said that the cooperative made them feel secure regarding their bean production. Many say that they can rely on the cooperative for support when they do not have enough money to buy inputs for the new seasonal production. *"If the harvest time arrives, and I do not have any supplies or money to keep working, I go to the Ceproma and talk to the manager and the manager fixes it."* The social networks of the Ceproma work both horizontally and vertically. Within the community, the Ceproma works horizontally, gives its members and neighbors support when they have financial problems, helping them access agricultural inputs and credits. They work as another neighbor, and facilitates a direct relationship of its members, strengthening the kinship of the community. In the vertical work of the cooperative, it has alliances with other bean industries in the territory, and with other cooperatives in the regional and national level.

The social network settlers have in El Progreso, broadens if they join the cooperative, increasing their bond within each other but also with other social actors in the surroundings, boosting their strength as bean producers. The Ceproma has helped in the creation of this social networks, increasing its members social capital. This has happened through different tools implemented by the Ceproma such as paying for the beans as soon as they receive them from the producers, giving the producers loans without interest for inputs used in bean production that should be paid with the next harvest, are just a few examples about this. The financial resources for this were obtained initially by a donation of a public institution and later with the income of selling beans. The social networks have increased almost at the same rate that the work of the Ceproma in the bean industry also increases. As they explained, they changed from an association to a cooperative to be able to access the social network that exists in Costa Rica for the cooperatives, to get training and support from other cooperatives around the country (Abenakyo, Sanginga, Njuki,

Kaaria, & Delve, 2007, p. 538). They had also worked with other organizations of beans producers in the area because as they say, *“the small favor that we are going to do right now, they can return it later in knowledge or something that we need”*. CoopeCeproma (name of the cooperative that runs the center) has also an advantage with the connection with the National Production Council as they are registered in the Institutional Supply Program (abbreviated to PAI in Spanish – Programa de Abastecimiento Institucional) where a public institution buys the beans at a better price than the market price, for the use in hospitals, schools, jails and other public services that need food. When they achieve to join the PAI and the government started buying them beans, the confidence and faith in the work of Ceproma increased among its members and made other producers who were not affiliated, to approach the cooperative to join the organization. The PAI has some disadvantages as well, for example what a public servant said that *“the norm of how much beans are bought and sold in the bean market is partly established by the PAI, so the Ceproma cannot decide how much beans they will sell to this program, but this depends on the amount of sellers that are also allowed to sell to the PAI, and how much production they have”*. This means that it is not the Ceproma that establishes the norms that define the possible actions in the bean market, but it is the government together with the private companies that import beans who shape these norms. The Ceproma is aware of this and is trying to take action in order to minimize the negative consequences in case of an unexpected change.

The community of El Progreso evolved from one large property owned by one family to a town of around fifty families. This town was created with a context of the settlement development of the Costa Rican law for agrarian reform, and thus, the had a unique history of development, different from the neighboring communities. In the community people had to interact, to negotiate, to develop formal and informal institutions that would shape social relations. When the Ceproma was built and the administration was given to the producers’ organization, which later on change to a cooperative, new negotiations, new interactions were created. Now, it was not from neighbor to neighbor but from producer to producer, between organization and producers, owners of a bean industry. The social arenas that play a key role for the bean processing are those of the community and the Ceproma, both intertwining from time to time in different situations.

Nevertheless, during my time in El Progreso, I was able to see people regarding the Ceproma and the settlement as two different “places”. In the community one can see how people interact as neighbors, what they believe is important to have a peaceful life and how they manage a daily life. *“With the people here, we are calm, with the neighbors that I have nobody bothers in anything. Life has been beautiful.”* The second is where people get together as producers, as owners

of a business, where they have to interact with other business people outside town, where they sell their production. The second arena is where the bean processing happens, one could say a bean industry arena led by the Ceproma (again one in each community). *“There is the Ceproma, and at this time if it were not the Ceproma, we do not know what we would be producing because (...) it does not matter if they pay us half of what it is worth, but they give me something because I have to eat and we all have to eat from that.”* Both have different interests and different norms that structure the interaction between each member of the arena. During the Venn Diagram exercise, the participants had a difficult time trying to rate the importance and proximity of different organizations with the Ceproma and the community, but the results gave them a new view of the different actors they interact with and how important these actors are for them. They could also see who was missing and who was present. For example, in the case of the community, the most important are Inder, the school, municipality, the church, the water and electricity institutions, an NGO for community development and an institution for social support. Half of these organizations were set close to the settlement showing that they were thought to participate often in the community. The production organizations such as the ministry of agriculture were not very present and not very important. This differs from the diagram done for the Ceproma where we have production institutions closer and more important and other public services further away and less important.

In the community, people say they have a peaceful relationship, with no big conflicts even though one can see that in some way, both arenas come together where the relationships of one overlap with the relationships of the other. *“The community has completely separated, parties were held here, dances were held for the people, we participate to help, he (the manager) does everything on his own now.”* One can see this in some problems that rose from a conflict in the Ceproma to become a personal in the community. Again, being a small and tight community, people know each other and have been living together for around twenty-five years. The town is composed of only the population center, the plots of land for farming, and has one grocery store and one school. In order to do anything else, people must go to Pejibaye downtown. These interactions depend on the social networks created around the community and around the processing of beans, for them it is very important to know and acknowledge who is friend with who in the community. These relationships are created around the production in the community. When the settlers need help in the harvesting and post-harvesting of beans they create a kin network of support between each other, and with the Ceproma. On the other hand, the Ceproma also creates and broadens the network with other industries and producers of the territory when harvest and post-harvest processing is needed. One of

the factors that complicates the relationship is that some people regard the Ceproma as an actor that came to create conflict in the community. *“The problem was that it (the Ceproma) brought only problems. There is a close group that receives help. You have to change the leader of the Ceproma. The Ceproma was a help for the community but now it is for a family.”*

Noteworthy, some of the people with an important position in the settlement do not want to participate in the Ceproma as they have had problems with the ones in charge right now, and they do not grow beans anymore, they have changed to other activities, and on the other hand, we must recall that the center is located in an area where at least two other industries for bean processing are established, including one of the largest in the country, so there are other options of buyers. Nevertheless, the Ceproma has come to achieve an important place in bean processing in the region. It came as an option for selling beans generating better income, and later position itself as the new guarantee of a safety net for farmers, and thus obtaining members from outside the settlement. As I was told by some members of the cooperative that were not part of the settlement, they joined the organization because they see benefits that no one else in the region can offer them.

The Ceproma also brought jobs to a town where a different option other than farming was hard to get; it was needed to go to Pejibaye or Pérez Zeledón to find other jobs. Even if it is this way, some people complain that the jobs created in the selection and packaging are done mostly by woman who do not belong to the settlement. Some say it is because women from the settlement do not want to do it, others because the administration of the Ceproma does not want to hire any women from the community. The creation of the center changed the reality for some people from renting land to having daily jobs in the industry of bean processing. But some of the complains of people who are against the center and who are fighting against the current dominators in the Ceproma say, that the center was taken by one family who has all, or most of its members working there and that the agrobusiness that was supposed to be for the community is now a family business. *“Now that is not a cooperative, that is personal business.”*

*“All my life as a farmer (...), I was born in the country side and that is what I was taught, and what remains in me (...) we never woke up, we just stayed like that.”* Expressions like this are very common if you are in the settlement talking with people about what they do, who they are and their work during their lives. The most important observation about the way people behave and think in El Progreso is that the few people who were able to change their farmers way of living were regarded by their neighbors as someone important, as someone that improved as a person. In general, people in El Progreso and in Sansi have been working the land almost since their childhood. The average schooling of settlers is incomplete primary school, not longer than six years

of school in most cases. This has shaped their structured set of predispositions about different subjects such as *“primary school is what I have, I never finished school, but (...) my thing agriculture”*, or when talking with me saying that I should know better than them how some things work just because I was from the capital, just because I went to the university.

The schooling average is getting higher but not as much as the government would like. When I was talking with one person, I asked the reason why young people are not finishing high school, some of them do not even start it. He said that there are no reasons to do so if they are going to work as a farmer in his land or as laborer in the farm of someone else. For women as well, many get pregnant in a young age (even around 13 or 14 years old) and their way of reasoning is *“I have a kid to take care, or I will get pregnant in the next years so finishing school will not mean a higher income if I stay here, therefore I will not spend more money or time in school, and I will start working and earning money now to help my family”*.

The children of the original settlers, but it might be a constant for farmers all around the country, believe that they could be better off than their parents and live off something else than farming. One example is a young person that said that he did not like his job, that he wanted something else outside, something that would make him earn twice as much as now, but he had not accepted because he would have to leave town (conflicting with farming life, with the social network he possesses). This would also conflict with the community constant that makes young boys (from twelve years onwards) become the breadwinners in case the father has a problem and cannot fulfill this role (for example in case he leaves, or he has health issues).

Another characteristic of the habitus is that there is a clear difference between the farmers and the people who get their income doing off-farm work. For example, someone in El Progreso who knows the people in Sansi said that Sansi have had difficulties doing the change from self-consumption to market-oriented work because they are still stocked in their role as farmers and cannot or do not want to change it. In his belief there is no one who has changed their mentality, their way of thinking or their actions from being a farmer to become an entrepreneur. The work that the Ceproma brought with the constant processing of beans also changed some of the peoples activities from a farming the land to be a wage worker in an agrobusiness with a fixed schedule from 7am to 3pm starting Monday to Friday and working Saturdays from 6am to 12pm. This has caused some problems in the community because there are people who do not understand how someone can make a living without having to be a farmer. *“I have been a producer all my life and we do not all have the mind to change the way we think that life is gained in another way, almost all*

*producers believe that if a boy does not use a machete or throw a sack on the shoulder, he's not going to make a living."*

## 5.2 Asentamiento Sansi

The asentamiento Sansi was created in 1998 in the district of Pittier, Coto Brus canton. There are forty-eight plots in the settlement with two different sizes, some of five and others of seven hectares. The limitations of the settlement are not homogenous compared with El Progreso, here it is dependent on each plot, some are out of limitations, but some were given later to new settlers, so the 15 to 20 years needed for people to have complete control of the land are not yet finished. This is important because achieving development is easier when there is an ownership of the land and people can do with it as they decide (de Soto, 2000). Therefore, this is one of the first difference I encountered between both communities, the physical capital, in regard to land ownership, is weaker in Sansi than in El Progreso. Another difference in the physical capital is that the two main roads to enter the community are vulnerable to weather conditions and are hindering the transportation of people and goods. On the contrary, drinking water service is better in Sansi than in El Progreso. In Sansi people are mainly growing staple food for their own consumption and have not diversified enough to sell significant amounts of other crops. They grow rice, beans and maize, together with some tubers and livestock such as pigs and chickens. A few people have diversified. The only difference I could find between the settlers was someone who was regarded as rich (in opposition to the others, the poor), one household that changed the production completely and was growing the entire plot with guanábana (soursop). Regarding the natural capital, Sansi uses some of the timber in natural reserves for cooking (together with gas and electricity) and as a few people told me, some poaching of small animals still occurs but it is becoming less and less common. The case of human capital is similar to El Progreso, people finished their education in primary school, they have been farmers their whole lives, and based on my observations, an average age of 50 years. The financial capital is lower than in El Progreso. The income of selling the produce is smaller as the Ceproma does not buy a large quantity of beans and the access to loans is reduced. In Sansi most of the investments are one for transportation means, mainly motorcycles, introducing new cash crops, education for the children and in improving the houses.

The lack of opportunities to sell the production in big quantities due to the conditions of the bridges which give access to the community is one of the factors that influence the decision of people to choose a certain livelihood strategy. Together with factors similar to El Progreso such as land ownership, education and money, people in Sansi cannot use a broad social capital having a

weak organization leading the Ceproma. The production that is mostly for self-consumption with one or two crops with surplus to be sold in the near market or to brokers who travel to the community to buy the production. A few producers who diversified or changed their production completely have had different social capital to achieve the change.

In order to arrive to Sansi, one can go by car, or if one uses the public transportation, as most of the settlers do, one must take one bus in the closest city called San Vito. The bus ride lasts about one hour and forty minutes, but one must change bus half way to Sansi. The change can only be made twice a day, with the buses leaving at 12pm and 4pm from San Vito. Otherwise, you can take a bus going to the west of San Vito, but you would have to walk after the first bus, one hour and a half of walking more to the journey. The cost of the whole journey is around 1500 colones. There are two entrances to the town, one which the bus uses, and the other that is closer to San Vito but does not have a bus service. The first one, where the bus enters, has a bridge, in poor condition, which only people or motorcycles can use and a stream that cannot be crossed when it grows during the rainy season. The other entrance allows cars but not heavy trucks because of the poor condition of a bridge. The settlement is separated in two parts, and people also regard the asentamiento as two separate parts, and not the town as one. First, “las parcelas”, the plots, the land of five or seven hectares used for farming, and second, “el centro de población” (population center) that are smaller plots used for housing. The terrain contributes to the differentiation with las parcelas in a higher terrain than el “centro de población” in the lower land closer to the river and the creek that surrounds it. The land in the population center was first offered, together with the parcelas, to the new settlers, but they declined to accept them and went to live on the parcelas. Since the Ceproma opened in 2010, they have milled rice of the local production for self-consumption. For the last two years they have processed beans, selling bags of forty-six kilograms (un quintal) to the Ceproma El Progreso, who pack it in smaller bags and sell it to the PAI. The first time they packed beans was in January of 2018 and they sold it again to El Progreso.

The settlement located in San Vito de Coto Brus, has many similarities with El Progreso but also many differences. They both are in the southeast region of Costa Rica, both have beans as the main crop, and have a Ceproma which was built to sell services for basic grain self-consumption and later on decided to change its work towards a market-oriented focus. Another similarity has been the patriarchal position that the state has had in both settlements. From the provision of land, to the delivery of production inputs, the state has tried to provide all public services, and agricultural inputs for the improvement of people’s quality of life. Thus, as a baseline of the situation of the settlement when it was created, similar to the characteristics of El Progreso, people

had only the land given by the state, similar skills and education, and could only differentiate between each other in the experience they had in farming the land. Regarding the social network in Sansi, there were two organizations but no clear leadership or a person that might have the acceptance of the community to be the person to lead their local industry, the Ceproma. This last part is important because when one person is able to differentiate from the others, all other members of the community change how they interact with the person who changed and his or her household. For example, in Sansi we can find that there is a member of the community that differentiate himself from the community for being a good farmer, (it differs from El Progreso where the difference depended on diversification of income or to become a leader or entrepreneur). *“Everyone that comes here is sent to my parcela because they know that we work well, even if we don’t have a lot of experience we put a lot of effort to it and even the others (settlers) are surprised of how good crops we have had.”*

In Sansi, the interaction between neighbors is peaceful but when they need to work together the situation changes. Two different organizations are fighting for control of the decisions in the settlement, two people trying to lead an organization. People in Sansi agree that these two organizations working in the community: the producers’ organization –which administrates the Ceproma–, and the organization created for the development of the community, fight for the support of the community as the main organization representing Sansi. People say both are important but that there is a clear division between both, the leaders do not work together, and some conflict exists between them. This clearly divides the social networks of the organizations and the influence and support that leaders would have if they worked together or if there was just one organization like in the case of El Progreso. About the two leaders of the producers’ organization one settler said: *“the actual leader, he controls everything as he wants. He believes he has the last word on everything. But then he (the other leader) is the one trying make changes, he brought new strength to the work that Ceproma is doing to improve.”* Apart from these organizations, there are not many social networks that help in the community. The relation with other public institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the National Production Council (Consejo Nacional de Producción) and Inder are more on a person to official relationship, hindering the importance of the role that an organization might have to achieve support from the state. According to the leader of the agricultural producers’ organizations, they give several benefits to the members such as a lower price for the services in the milling of rice and a higher price when buying the members beans (this benefit started this year). The goal with these benefits is to recruit more members and keep happy



the ones who already belong to the organization, thus, having a stronger social capital as an organization.

Noteworthy is that there is a social difference between the high part of the settlement and the lower part. Confidence in security is part of everyday life for people living in the high part but between high and low part, people are more insecure. *“In the lower part of the settlement, you cannot leave a house alone. Everything is stolen. It is something that now bothers more and harms more. There is no longer any tranquility in the community to leave the house alone for a while.”* While I was in the settlement, two of the members of the association in charge of the Ceproma had to sleep in the Ceproma to take care of the beans that were stored there. They were afraid that someone of el centro de población, where the Ceproma is located, would come in to steal. Even though there are only six families in the center of population, people of the parcelas regard them as conflictive people with bad habits such as “drugs, parties and alcohol”, thus making them dangerous. There is lack of union between people of las parcelas and people in the center of population and between the center of population and the Ceproma.

In a similar way to the evolution of the community and the Ceproma in El Progreso, in Sansi the community started developing social relations when it was created, while that of Ceproma continues in an incipient process of formation due to the weak organization and impact of the center in the local producers. Another important factor of the Ceproma is that, because there is almost no competition with other industries in the territory, the norms of that shape interaction of the Ceproma towards the community do not change and asks little from the organization and the producers. Noteworthy that following the Venn Diagram exercise done in Sansi, we obtained important results for the people in the activity with which they could see by themselves how they rated the importance and proximity of institutions for both the community and for the Ceproma. In the case of the community, the most important organizations are those who bring social welfare to people such as the school, a clinic, public services and also Inder and the Ceproma, that are not focused on social support, but they have the highest proximity to the settlement. The organizations that are further away are the ones linked with production, police and the church. This differs from the diagram done for the Ceproma where we have production institutions closer and more important than other public services who are further away and less important. Noteworthy, for El Progreso and Sansi, Inder and the Ceproma are always one of the most important and with more proximity to the community and the Ceproma.

Sansi has several similarities to El Progreso, there is only one church, they do not have a bar, nor restaurant, they have a school, and a grocery store, even though people are very dissatisfied

with it. People living in las parcelas say they have a peaceful relationship between them, albeit there are conflicts between some settlers. The people of las parcelas give a peer meaning to the other “parceleros” (the parcelas owners) because they are their farmers too, they earn their lives working the land, while the people in el centro de población do not work the land which makes them different and not comparable to the others, to the farmers.

People in Sansi’s population center do not have plots, like in El Progreso. Almost all the members of the community have similar livelihoods and belong to a similar socioeconomic class, which gives them a similar economic capital. There is one person that is recognized in the community as having a better-off position, thus, giving this household a better position to interact in the community. “(Woman talking) *There is a man that started with guanábana, and he has it now* (talking about money). (Husband talking) *He is now making money with the guanábana, if only we had more like him.*” Another parcelero is known for how good at farming he is, giving him symbolic capital. This allows him and his family to interact with others using his position as “a person that knows what he is doing”, giving him credibility among his peers.

For the case of the Ceproma, there is an outer difference that stands from El Progreso, there are no other bean industries near Sansi which gives them the opportunity of a position where social network is important. If they manage to create a social network of the bean producers of the territory, they would gain access to many households and their production, contributing to their development but also establishing comprises of mutual support in activities and negotiations for a stronger bean industry in the region. Nonetheless, the farmers do not understand the opportunity they have of strengthening. There is only one big company that might compete for labor force, but it is a pineapple corporation – Pindeco. For the interaction in the processing of beans we can find two leaders in the organization and both are competing in who is a better leader, who is more fitted to lead the change from self-consumption to market-oriented. The position of the person in the organization that administrates the center is important as it will give this person a higher symbolic capital towards his peers but also a broader social capital by interacting with people from outside the community. Therefore, it is also important to say who is a member of a certain organization and who is not, being a member gives them a higher social and symbolic capital. Lastly, it is important to point out that a new actor came to play, a Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock officer that has to interact with people in order to accomplish her interests, this is, helping in the improvement of the beans harvest and post-harvest processes. This person must understand the rules of the social arena, and the capitals that are important in order to succeed in any development project.

As in El Progreso, the main finding regarding the habitus is directly linked with the symbolic capital. Being able to get out of the “I am only a farmer” way of thinking, to engage in an entrepreneurship initiative is not only being able to modify their embedded predispositions of a farmer but if recognized by their peers in the community it would add symbolic capital to a person and the household, as it means that their social network, skills and knowledge increases. The long-term assistance that the government gave to the settlers shaped their habitus for a way of being dependent to the welfare state, they believe that any other practices from the government would jeopardize their lives. A person that can break that barrier and improve his/her livelihoods is regarded by the others as a person having a good life.

In Sansi we can find people who have been farmers all their lives, women who work in house chores and help in agricultural tasks such as caring for chickens, planting crops for family consumption, and sometimes threshing rice and beans. Some of the women in the settlement said that men go to work the land while they stay home just doing a little cleaning and some cooking – it is told as if it was not an important task for the household. It is hard for both men and women to regard what women do in the house as work, and also, they do not say or think that the agricultural tasks done by women are crucial for their livelihoods, for them, it is only a small help to make it easier for men to take care of the vital stages of the farm production. Another characteristic of their way of being, their habitus is that they are also people who for fifteen to twenty years have depended on state aid and feel that the State should give them everything they need just because they are poor. *“When we started was when everything was given, now they have already removed all the aid.”*

There is a marked difference between what men and women are supposed to do or not do, we find an established rigid separation between gender roles. Men are imagined to be tough, hardworking people that dedicate their lives to be a breadwinner, in contrast women are the ones in charge of the house chores, taking care of children and minor agricultural work. When talking about projects for agriculture and production, a woman said to me that she was wondering *“Why is it that here they do not make in projects that teach housewives what we can do with everything we have, to cook different things with what we have?”* During the first meeting I attended a mixed group of eleven men and seven women were present and men were on one side, and women on the other without anyone telling them to do so.

## 6 Discussion

The livelihoods in the studied settlements show similarities and differences between Sansi and El Progreso in regard of the livelihood strategies people have chosen, the capitals they have, and the way interaction happens in the community. Nonetheless, I was looking for some of the differences that could explain: why are some Cepromas created in Costa Rica for grain processing able to achieve the change from a self-consumption to a market-oriented focus, while others are not? I was able to learn about the history of the Cepromas El Progreso and Sansi, both settlements created around twenty years ago during the 1990s. Three main points that I will develop next were the key differences that stand out for me in order to succeed in the change from a system of self-consumption to market-orientation in bean processing which will help other Cepromas achieve a better outcome in the relationship with the community and therefore, facilitate the joint work in a market-orientation work. These three aspects are: the role of an organization as the state, the interconnection community-Ceproma, and the emergence of a leader and entrepreneur.

The three main points are directly linked with the findings regarding the livelihoods, and theory of practice. For example, in the role of the organization as the state, one of the main findings is that a factor that made people choose a certain livelihood had to do with how secure they felt to invest in a certain production and know that they could sell it afterwards, or if they needed to diversify to off-farm activities or to diversify their farm products (needing more social network to sell this somewhere else), how an organization such as the Ceproma administration could give people income security with their production. In the case of this security, people felt that the Ceproma was a key player in the community intertwining the social arenas of community and Ceproma. People saw a leader in the general manager of the Ceproma El Progreso, giving him a new status to someone who was “one of them” before, but became an industry manager. This person had different capitals in his transformation from farmer to leader –for example, he learned new skills as a manager, he had access to new social networks gained through his job as center manager, he acquired a new way of speaking, new words due to his job and constant interaction with public servants, university teachers and others– giving him a new position in the community allowing him to negotiate with other community members and with people from outside of El Progreso. In Sansi, the lack of a clear leader shaped their social arena in a different way and most of the people must interact with people from outside of the community to sell their production,

reducing the opportunities of cooperation within the community of Sansi. In the next sections, an in-depth analysis of these three main arguments that can be pull out from the results.

## 6.1 The role of an organization as the state

As I have explained throughout the last chapter, the state has had a key role in the development of settlements since the creation on ITCO in the decade of the sixties. Since then little has changed in this role of a “Estado patriarchal” (patriarchal state, meaning a state where social programs give people what they need with the only condition of being poor and part of society, different resources such as money, houses, land, agricultural inputs, schooling, health system), but it has shaped the being or habitus of many people like the settlers of El Progreso and Sansi, where they have become accustomed to receive from the state all they need with little demand for positive results from the investment. With the change of IDA to Inder, these benefits, that were considered a right because they were settlers and poor, have changed. Now as a decision of Inder and the organizations of agricultural producers, the benefits of Inder are only given to those members of the community who work with the Cepromas and give the expected results in bean production. This brought complains from some of the members of the community who are blaming the Cepromas. *“Since the Ceproma entered, the whole population was no longer helped. Before the Ceproma, the whole population was helped but now the Ceproma became commercial.”* Inder uses the organization of the Cepromas to distribute the inputs given for the bean production, therefore, many think it was the center who chose not to give inputs for everyone and who decided that the inputs where only for beans and nothing else.

Nevertheless, the most important change was not that the state left, but that in El Progreso, the role of the state was taken by an organization, in this case, the Ceproma. They are helping their members with inputs, fixing and improving roads in the community, taking care of the school and soccer field, giving loans, and in cases of emergency, donating cash for people in harsh socioeconomic situations. As said by van Dijk, “improving livelihoods requires shaping locally viable paths to three interrelated forms of emancipation” (2011, p. 113) the political, socioeconomic and cultural. Also, the Ceproma sells services for the bean production, in the harvest and post-harvest processes, all payable with the next harvest. One of the most important aspects that the organization did, was to pay for the beans in the exact moment when producers bring their crops to the plant for processing. Therefore, some of the community members saw the organization as the one who came to replace the state when almost no one else was giving any support in the community.

Contrary to all the work done by the Ceproma El Progreso, in Sansi I found out that the organization never developed a special relationship with the community. People working in rice milling were members of the board only, so no jobs were created for the community –this was one observation of someone in the population center, they wanted the center to create jobs. People in the community saw the Ceproma just as another middleman for bean commercialization. The organization had to sell the beans to the Ceproma El Progreso because they do not have a registered brand nor health permissions, so they work as a broker and not as a real company selling at market prices. The little support they give to the members come in better prices for rice milling and, for this last harvest they paid better prices for the beans, a payment made in cash –noteworthy, the money was from El Progreso.

## 6.2 The interconnection between community-Ceproma

As I was walking in Sansi and talking with people in the high part of the settlement, it struck me that all these people were living on las parcelas –land usually used for production while the plot in the “centro de población” is for living. The ones I asked about it, said that when offered they had not accepted to buy the plot in the population center so they went to live in the parcela. Therefore, the settlers make a distinction between the high and the low part of the asentamiento. Sansi works within several distinctions, higher part/lower part, producers’ organization/community organization, Ceproma/settlement. The separations are not creating any benefit, but they divide people instead.

One important aspect that I could see during my field work and that it is important to connect the community with the Ceproma is the service of rice milling offered to the community. When people arrived to the milling of rice, one day a week, they tend to interact and strengthen their relationship, as they wait for the rice to be ready, they talk about anything and everything. They use the time to discuss about the problems of the community, about the prices of the produce they sell and about the work of the Ceproma. The rice milling is a perfect moment to expand the social network of Ceproma because many of the people that come to buy the service are from outside the community. Both communities give the milling service but Sansi yet has to use this service as a way to strengthen the relations with the community and to foster the bean industry.

One of the key aspects that El Progreso has achieved is the union of most of its members but also of members outside of the community (Abenakyo et al., 2007, p. 539). The organization administrating the center has also learned how to implement actions to tell the community that the Ceproma is there for them, that they will work in developing both together, industry and community. At the end, people’s livelihoods depend on both, the life in the community and the

company that gives them economic stability. As Sakdapolrak explains very well, “livelihoods are interpreted as outcomes of struggle within unequal fields of social relations” (2007, p. 24). In the case of my thesis, I believe this happens when the settlers choose a strategy for their livelihoods considering the struggle between community and Ceproma, between household and Ceproma, what is best for “us” as family, as community, versus what the Ceproma wants from “us”. If the Ceproma has a strong influence on people, these people tend to choose different livelihoods where their notion of reality says that the community is separated from the Ceproma, and the center is not working. We can say that the farmers of Sansi and El Progreso have different livelihoods strategies because the social arenas where they interact with other players, provide them with different social relations, which at the same time, demands different capitals with different values.

### 6.3 The emergence of a leader and entrepreneur

From all the people I talked with in the settlements, only a few of them said that they have not been farmers all their lives. One worked in carpentry, another in construction, and another one did any job he was able to find. Nonetheless, all of the settlers have worked the land, even if it was during their youth in a rural area. Another similarity is that most of them were from that same southeast region of the country. This means that most of them share a similar background and similar culture. The study showed that in El Progreso social networks are stronger than in Sansi, given the community members more social capital to negotiate their agricultural production, and giving also a better symbolic capital to those members who were able to change their living from a farmer to a businessman or industry manager, change that none has achieved in Sansi.

In both settlements we have people who agree with the Ceproma, people who are indifferent to it, and some people who are against the organizations or their leaders. Some do not trust a farmer to be the leader of an industry, and as one member of the Ceproma of El Progreso said, if other farmers see you earning money without working the land, they believe you are stealing the money. The change of belief that one can earn a living without working the land is hard for people who have always been farmers. Likewise, in Sansi and El Progreso people do not want to join the organization and take a leading position so it is hard to find anyone that would get off their routine, and become a leader, yet not only a leader but an entrepreneur in a bean production company. Based on Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992/2014, p. 117), I believe that people who are against joining the organization and taking a leading position are reproducing the bad outcomes, they are reproducing and reinforcing their way of thinking of being a farmer, while rebelling themselves

against the system, against a change, this rebellion against change continues reproducing and strengthening their habitus as farmers and as a non-leader.

## 7 Conclusions

During my fieldwork in Costa Rica, many of the people in the settlements asked me “*What are you doing? What do you want to find out? How will this study help us?*” I also asked myself those exact same questions, but I believe I learned much more than just a possible answer to my research question: *Why do the Cepromas created in Costa Rica for grain processing achieve the change from a self-consumption to a market-oriented focus, while others do not?* Many of the studies done before in the settlements are quantitative data about fertilizers, yields, correct machines for post-harvest process, but almost none was a qualitative study about the people producing the beans and how they influenced the Cepromas. The qualitative methods were useful to comprehend the complexity of the decision-making process of the livelihood strategy. Understanding that inputs for making that decision will change the result of which livelihood strategy they choose is important if one wants to help them improve their strategies. Where are people living, how they live, with whom do they interact, what assets or capitals do they have?

All these factors will influence their decision. It is not only a decision of what assets have more economic value or are easier to change from one capital to another. As a complex system, it is not only giving money, or more land, or inputs for production, but one must take into account what are people used to, how do they normally handle similar situations, one must know who they really are and how they are not only as a person but as a community, as a culture. The background and context of where people come, how they relate with others, and how new actors in a social arena could come to change the complexity of relations and capitals is a must to take in consideration when analyzing peoples’ livelihoods. Changing the way of thinking of farmer to an entrepreneur is not only done by training in accountability and team leadership. Noteworthy, the interconnection between Ceproma and community must be strengthened.

As seen with the results, it is necessary for the center to improve with help of the community, and the community must know that the organization is also there for them and that is not only another failed project from the state, or a family business taken by one or two households. The study showed that we must rethink the way we are implementing projects and changes aiming to improve rural development. One must not only look if there is access to technical resources



(money, machinery, raw materials, labor, among others) to open an industry. Before a public institution, such as Inder, starts investing resources in a project, there is a need to know firsthand why people want a project, which would be the consequences for the households, are people prepared to work on it, or is it that they think it would be nice to work with it? Are the structural norms (formal and informal institutions) that mold social interactions and people's lives ready for that project?

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# Appendix

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